

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

RESPONDS TO HURRICANE KATRINA

MEDICAL & FACILITY SUPPORT EFFORTS:

- **Federal Medical Contingency Stations** – Two 500-bed temporary hospitals are being established in Meridian at the Naval Air Station and Air National Guard Base.
- **DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Teams)** – Each team consists of 25 to 40 medical practitioners and support staff providing facility and shelter support. Every DMAT team is self-sustaining, deploying with food, supplies, fuel and other items necessary to work in disaster-stricken areas.
- **Strike Teams** – These medical support teams are placed in health care facilities in order to provide support to staff during ongoing recovery efforts.
- **VMAT (Veterinary Medical Support Teams)** – VMAT teams provide veterinary medical support to communities stricken by disaster. Each team consists of 20 to 25 veterinary professionals.
- **Volunteer Doctors** – Hundreds of physicians from within the state and around the nation have arrived to assist in recovery efforts.
- **Volunteer Nurses** – Hundreds of nurses have also responded to assist in recovery efforts.
- **Mississippi Department of Health Nurses** – Public Health Nurses are currently posted at hospitals and shelters in affected areas, providing continuous assessments regarding patient load, supply needs and other necessary functions.
- **Daily supply runs** – Needed medical and support supplies are constantly refreshed from the MDH warehouse in central Mississippi.
- **Federal/state activities underway** – MDH and federal authorities are responding to the challenges posed by Hurricane Katrina in a cooperative and mutually supportive manner.
- **More than 1,000 medical support/public health personnel are on the ground in disaster-affected areas** – Our teams of support professionals are providing a solid foundation for our medical practitioners in the field.

DISEASE AND INJURY SURVEILLANCE EFFORTS:

- **Epidemiology professionals from the Centers for Disease Control (17) and State of Florida (8) are working with the Mississippi Department of Health to assess disease prevalence in affected areas** - Activities include site visits to health care facilities on a daily basis to survey facilities on the types of illnesses and injuries that are presenting for treatment. Survey information will be used to develop daily disease response plans. Assessments of shelters are also conducted on a periodic basis.
- **Continuing education efforts among disaster survivors** – Public health workers continue to support and encourage proper sanitation and hand washing among disaster survivors. Sanitation among the general population is essential to limiting illness and/or disease, and hand washing is extremely important to reduce the spread of viruses/infection.

MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY EFFORTS:

- **MDH Strategic National Stockpile site** – Mississippi is the first state in history to distribute medical supplies from the federal government's Strategic National Stockpile. Our Receiving, Staging and Storing (RSS) site is operational with pharmaceuticals, vaccine supplies and other medical supplies being distributed to hospitals on a daily basis.
- **Tetanus vaccine** - 21,000 doses have been distributed thus far, with another 10,000 on hand to be distributed based on demand.
- **Mobile pharmacies** - Numerous mobile pharmacies are being established in affected areas of the state. Each facility offers seven to 30 days of medications to disaster-affected individuals at no cost.
- **Retail pharmacies** – Additionally, CVS/pharmacy, Kroger, Wal-Mart, Walgreen's and Rite Aid are currently participating in a program to provide a short-term supply of medications to those in affected areas at no charge.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS:

- **MDH Water Supply Division** – Water Supply Division employees are working with water systems in affected areas to re-establish service to their customers. Our Public Health Laboratory is testing water samples around the clock.
- **Sanitarians/Environmentalists** - Forty-six sanitarians and environmentalists have been deployed to disaster-affected areas from both federal agencies and the State of Florida, which has also deployed a portable water testing lab for use in Mississippi recovery efforts.

- **Sanitation assessments** – In order to provide a clean, healthy environment for those displaced by hurricane Katrina, MDH environmentalists are conducting sanitation assessments at shelters. These inspections will be followed by placement of portable sanitation stations as they are needed.
- **Vector assessments** – MDH professionals are assessing disaster-affected areas for the possibility of disease-spreading pests.

SURGICAL SUPPORT EFFORTS:

- **Carolinas MED-1** – Arriving on two semi-trucks, this portable surgical hospital and self-contained health facility comes equipped with 100 patient beds, a medical staff of 92 and a fully-stocked pharmacy.
- **USNS *Comfort*** – This U.S. Navy Surgical Hospital Ship is expected to arrive within two days, bringing with it 250 patient beds and an additional 350,000 pounds of medical supplies.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- **Continuing press releases to statewide media** – The public is kept informed of the latest information and updates concerning Hurricane Katrina disaster recovery efforts by timely, accurate releases from the MDH Office of Communications.
- **Radio public service announcements** – Radio stations statewide are broadcasting informative public service announcements, educating the public on a variety of disaster-related topics.
- **Health and safety brochures** - Distributed throughout the Gulf Coast, these brochures supply those most affected by Hurricane Katrina with the information that they need to stay healthy and survive throughout the recovery process.
- **Website continually updated** – Recognizing the need for a multi-faceted approach to information dissemination, MDH utilizes its web presence as another avenue to inform the public about disaster recovery as well as other health issues.
- **Responding to media requests for information** – Through establishing and maintaining a strong relationship with local and national media, the MDH Office of Communications works to ensure that accurate, reliable information is conveyed to the public through all forms of mass media, including radio, television and print.